# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:602
ANSWERED ON:21.11.2001
ALLEVIATION OF SUFFERING OF AFGHAN SIKHS AND HINDUS
SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

the steps taken at the diplomatic level to alleviate the suffering of Sikhs and Hindus leaving Afghanistan?

## Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ( SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

On account of prolonged civil conflict in Afghanistan a large number of Afghan nationals are presently living in India. In keeping with our traditional policy of friendship towards the people of Afghanistan, all Afghan nationals, including those of Indian origin, who came to India with valid travel documents/passports are being allowed to stay unhindered; they are currently being granted annual visa extensions. In addition, we have also received information that 275 Afghan Sikhs/Hindu families from Afghanistan are presently in Pakistan with the intention of travelling to India. Government is examining these requests to travel to India sympathetically and keeping in view the humanitarian grounds. A significant number of applications have already been cleared for grant of visa. Government have also waived visa fee for these applicants.

Government is also working actively, along with other countries, for restoration of peace and stability on Afghanistan so that conditions could be created conducive to early return of these families to their homes.